

Document Title:	Fees and Refunds Policy
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1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This Fees and Refunds Policy outlines The Animal Academy Pty Ltd's (RTO ID: 45907) approach to fees and charges for training and assessment services, and the conditions under which refunds may be provided to students.

This policy applies to all domestic students enrolled in nationally recognised training qualifications and units of competency delivered by The Animal Academy.

This policy has been developed to comply with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2025 and aligns with relevant Australian Consumer Law requirements.

2. DEFINITIONS

Course Commencement Date: The date on which a student officially begins their enrolled course, as specified in the Letter of Offer.

Enrolment Fee: A non-refundable administrative fee charged to secure a student's place in a course.

Tuition Fee: The fee charged for the delivery of training and assessment services, excluding the enrolment fee and other non-tuition fees.

Non-Tuition Fee: Additional fees charged for services or materials separate from tuition, such as re-assessments, replacement certificates, or textbooks.

Provider Default: Circumstances where The Animal Academy fails to provide the agreed training services and has not arranged suitable alternative arrangements.

Student Withdrawal: When a student voluntarily decides to cease their enrolment in a course by providing written notice to The Animal Academy.

3. FEE STRUCTURE

3.1 Tuition Fees

All tuition fees are clearly stated in the student's Letter of Offer prior to enrolment. Tuition fees are payable for the training and assessment services provided for the enrolled qualification or unit(s) of competency.

The Animal Academy does not offer State-funded placements; all courses are full fee paying.

Tuition fees include:

- Delivery of all units of competency included in the qualification
- Access to learning materials and the online learning management system

- Up to three (3) assessment attempts per unit of competency
- Access to learning management system
- Student support services (academic support, study skills support and mentoring)
- Records management and archiving
- IT support for learning platforms
- Issuance of one copy of the qualification certificate and record of results upon successful completion
- Standard postage of qualification certificate and record of results

3.2 Enrolment Fee

An enrolment fee of **\$250.00 (AUD)** is payable upon acceptance of the Letter of Offer to secure a student's place in the course.

The enrolment fee includes GST and consists of enrolment processing and administration requirements to set up the student and includes general enrolment requirements.

The enrolment fee is non-refundable under any circumstances, including but not limited to:

- Student withdrawal before course commencement
- Student withdrawal after course commencement
- Course cancellation by The Animal Academy
- Provider default
- Student deferral or transfer to another course

3.3 Other Fees and Charges

The following non-tuition fees may apply during or after a student's enrolment:

Service/Item	Fee (AUD)
Re-assessment (per additional assessment attempt beyond the three included)	\$100
Re-issuing of record of results (additional copies)	\$30
Re-issuing of qualification certificate (additional copies)	\$60
Express postage for additional copies of certificates/results	\$15
Replacement textbooks or learning materials	POA
Recognition of Prior Learning - Initial review fee per submission	\$250
Recognition of Prior Learning - On successful RPL application per unit	POA

Note: POA = Price on Application. Contact The Animal Academy for current pricing.

4. PAYMENT METHODS AND TERMS

4.1 Accepted Payment Methods

The Animal Academy accepts payment via:

- Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to BSB: 082 057, Account: 82 641 8307
- PayID: info@animalacademy.com.au

- Bank cheque payable to "The Animal Academy" (must be in Australian dollars from an Australian bank)

All payments must be made in Australian dollars (AUD). Students must identify their payment using their First name and SURNAME.

4.2 Payment Options

Option 1 - Payment in Full:

Students may pay the total tuition fees in full upon enrolment. This includes the enrolment fee plus all tuition fees. Tuition will be held in an account that is then paid out for services received.

Option 2 - Payment Plan:

Students may enter into a payment plan arrangement with The Animal Academy. Payment plan terms will be outlined in the Letter of Offer and may include:

- Payment of the enrolment fee upon acceptance of the offer
- Regular instalment payments (e.g., monthly, fortnightly) as agreed
- Due dates for each instalment payment

Payment plans are subject to approval by The Animal Academy. Students must meet the agreed payment schedule to maintain their enrolment status and access to training materials and systems. Refer to 4.4 for default in payment process.

Payment Timing

The Animal Academy operates on a payment-in-arrears model. This means students commence training before their first payment is due, and subsequent payments are due for training already provided rather than training to be provided. This approach minimises financial risk for students and ensures compliance with prepaid fee protection requirements.

4.3 Fee Payment and Course Access

Students must pay fees according to the agreed schedule (either in full or via payment plan) to maintain access to:

- The student portal and online learning management system
- Training materials and resources
- Assessment services
- Support services

Qualifications and Statements of Attainment will not be issued until all outstanding fees are paid in full and a valid Unique Student Identifier (USI) has been provided.

4.4 Default in Fee Payments

If a student defaults on fee payments, The Animal Academy may:

- Suspend access to the student portal, learning management system, and all training resources
- Cancel the student's enrolment after appropriate notice
- Refer the outstanding debt to a debt collection agency
- Refuse re-enrolment until all outstanding debts are repaid

Students experiencing financial difficulty are encouraged to contact The Animal Academy immediately to discuss alternative payment arrangements before defaulting on payments.

Third-Party Payments:

Where a third party (such as an employer) agrees to pay a student's fees, the student remains ultimately liable for all fees if the third party defaults on payment. The student will not be issued a qualification until all outstanding fees are settled.

The Animal Academy follows a progressive debt recovery process:

Stage 1 (7 days overdue): Automated email reminder

Stage 2 (14 days overdue): Formal email and phone contact

Stage 3 (21 days overdue): Final notice and suspension warning

Stage 4 (30 days overdue): Access suspended to student portal and LMS

Stage 5 (40 days overdue): Matter referred to debt collection agency

At any stage, students may contact The Animal Academy to negotiate alternative payment arrangements.

5. REFUND POLICY

5.1 General Principles

This refund policy complies with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2025 and Australian Consumer Law. The Animal Academy is committed to acting fairly and reasonably in assessing all refund requests whilst balancing the legitimate interests of the organisation and its students.

Key Principles:

- The enrolment fee is non-refundable under any circumstances
- Students who have commenced their course and subsequently withdraw are not entitled to a refund of tuition fees already paid
- Refunds are only provided in specific circumstances as outlined in this policy
- All refund decisions are made at the discretion of The Animal Academy in accordance with this policy and relevant legislation

5.2 Student Withdrawal Before Course Commencement

10-Day Cooling-Off Period:

Students have a right to cancel their enrolment agreement within 10 business days from and including the day after they signed or received the agreement, in accordance with Australian Consumer Law.

If a student exercises their cooling-off right within this 10 business day period:

- The enrolment fee is non-refundable
- Any tuition fees paid will be refunded in full

Withdrawal After Cooling-Off Period but Before Course Commencement:

If a student withdraws after the 10 business day cooling-off period but before the course commencement date:

- The enrolment fee is non-refundable

- If the student withdraws more than 14 days before the course commencement date, a refund of 80% of any tuition fees paid will be provided
- If the student withdraws 14 days or less before the course commencement date, no refund of tuition fees will be provided

5.3 Student Withdrawal After Course Commencement

Once a student has commenced their enrolled course (i.e., from the course commencement date specified in the Letter of Offer), the following applies:

- The enrolment fee is non-refundable
- Students are not entitled to a refund of any tuition fees already paid
- Students on payment plans remain liable for all outstanding instalments unless exceptional circumstances apply (see section 5.7)
- Students who cease participation without formal withdrawal will be liable for all outstanding fees

Important: Students must formally withdraw in writing using the official withdrawal form available on The Animal Academy website or by contacting student services for the official form. Non-attendance is not considered a withdrawal. Students who do not formally withdraw will continue to be charged fees and will receive Not Competent results for incomplete assessments.

Students are strongly encouraged to discuss their situation with The Animal Academy staff before withdrawing, as support services and alternative arrangements may be available.

5.4 Course Cancellation by The Animal Academy

5.4.1 Cancellation Due to Insufficient Numbers

If The Animal Academy cancels a course due to insufficient student enrolment numbers (this will usually happen prior to any tuition fees being paid and therefore no refunds will be given):

- The enrolment fee is non-refundable
- A refund of tuition fees paid will be considered based on any tuition payments have been paid and what services have been provided/received.
- Any refund will be processed within 28 calendar days of the cancellation notification
- Students will be notified in writing of the cancellation as soon as practicable

5.4.2 Cancellation Due to Other Circumstances

If The Animal Academy is unable to provide a course for reasons other than insufficient student numbers (such as loss of trainer, regulatory issues, or other unforeseen circumstances), The Animal Academy will:

1. First attempt to provide a suitable alternative arrangement, including:
 - Alternative course delivery schedule or location
 - Deferral to a later intake
 - Transfer to an alternative course
2. If suitable alternative arrangements cannot be made:
 - The enrolment fee is **non-refundable**
 - Where fees have been paid in advance, any partial refund will be calculated based on the proportion of training not delivered
 - The calculation will be: $(\text{Total Tuition Fees} \div \text{Total Units in Course}) \times \text{Number of Units Not Delivered}$

- No refund will be provided for units where the student has already received training and assessment services

5.5 Student Deferral

Students who wish to defer their course to a later intake:

- Must submit a formal deferral request in writing
- The enrolment fee remains non-refundable and will be applied to the deferred course
- Tuition fees already paid will be credited towards the deferred course
- No refund of fees will be provided for deferral
- Deferral is subject to availability of places in the later intake
- Students must recommence within 12 months of their original course commencement date, or fees paid may be forfeited

5.6 Course Transfer

Students who wish to transfer to a different course offered by The Animal Academy:

- Must submit a formal transfer request in writing
- The enrolment fee remains non-refundable and is not transferable to the new course - a new enrolment fee will apply
- Where no training has been delivered, tuition fees paid may be credited towards the new course, subject to approval
- Where training has already been delivered, fees for completed units will not be refunded or transferred
- Students may be liable for any fee difference if the new course costs more than the original course

5.7 Exceptional Circumstances

The Animal Academy recognises that exceptional circumstances beyond a student's control may arise. In such cases, students may apply for consideration of a refund or fee waiver.

Exceptional circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Serious illness or injury of the student (medical evidence required)
- Death or critical illness of an immediate family member (evidence required)
- Unavoidable changes in employment that prevent course completion (evidence required)
- Other compassionate or compelling circumstances (evidence required)

Application Process:

- Students must submit a written application for exceptional circumstances consideration
- Applications must include supporting documentation (medical certificates, statutory declarations, etc.)
- Applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by senior management
- The Animal Academy reserves the right to request additional information or evidence
- Decisions will be communicated in writing within 21 calendar days of receiving the application

Possible Outcomes:

- Partial or full refund of tuition fees (enrolment fee remains non-refundable)
- Deferral without penalty
- Fee freeze for payment plan students

- Other arrangements deemed appropriate

5.8 Exclusions from Refunds

No refund will be provided in the following circumstances:

- Services already received
- Student breaches the Student Code of Conduct and enrolment is cancelled
- Student provides fraudulent or misleading information during the enrolment process
- Student fails to meet course entry requirements or pre-requisites
- Student's unsatisfactory academic progress results in course withdrawal
- Student fails to maintain payment plan commitments
- Student decides the course does not meet their expectations after commencement
- Student's personal circumstances change (unless deemed exceptional circumstances under section 5.7)

6. REFUND PROCESSING

6.1 Refund Application Process

To apply for a refund, students must:

1. Complete the official Refund Application Form available on The Animal Academy website or from student services
2. Provide all required supporting documentation
3. Submit the application via email to info@animalacademy.com.au or by post to The Animal Academy
4. Retain copies of all documents submitted

6.2 Refund Assessment and Notification

- The Animal Academy will assess all refund applications within 21 calendar days of receipt of a complete application
- Students will be notified in writing of the outcome of their refund application
- If a refund is approved, the notification will include the refund amount and expected processing timeframe
- If a refund is denied, the notification will include the reason(s) for denial and information about the appeals process

6.3 Payment of Refunds

- Approved refunds will be processed within 28 calendar days of the approval decision
- Refunds will be paid to the person or organisation who originally made the payment
- Refunds will be made via electronic funds transfer to the nominated bank account
- Students must provide valid Australian bank account details for refund processing
- A refund receipt will be provided upon payment processing

6.4 GST and Refunds

All refund amounts will be calculated inclusive of GST (if applicable) and will be the GST-inclusive amount returned to the student or payer.

7. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Students who are dissatisfied with a decision made under this Fees and Refunds Policy have the right to lodge a complaint or appeal.

7.1 Internal Review

Students may request an internal review of a refund decision by:

1. Submitting a written request for review within 20 business days of receiving the original decision
2. Providing any additional information or evidence to support the review request
3. The review will be conducted by a senior staff member not involved in the original decision
4. Students will be notified of the review outcome in writing within 21 calendar days

7.2 Formal Complaints Process

If a student remains dissatisfied after internal review, they may lodge a formal complaint using The Animal Academy's Complaints and Appeals Policy and procedures, available on the website and in the Student Handbook.

7.3 External Dispute Resolution

If the matter remains unresolved after following The Animal Academy's internal complaints and appeals process, students may seek external dispute resolution through:

Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)

Website: www.asqa.gov.au

Phone: 1300 701 801

Consumer Affairs or Fair Trading (State-based)

Contact details vary by state - visit your state's Consumer Affairs or Fair Trading website

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC)

Website: www.accc.gov.au

7.4 Rights Under Australian Consumer Law

This written agreement, and the right to make complaints and seek appeals of decisions and actions under various processes, does not affect the rights of the student to take action under the Australian Consumer Law if the Australian Consumer Law applies.

8. RECORD KEEPING

The Animal Academy will maintain accurate records of:

- All fees charged to students
- All payments received from students
- All refund applications and decisions
- All refunds processed
- All complaints and appeals related to fees and refunds

All records will be retained in accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2025 and relevant legislation for a minimum of 30 years.

9. POLICY REVIEW

This Fees and Refunds Policy will be reviewed annually or as required to ensure compliance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2025, relevant legislation, and best practice principles.

Students will be notified of any changes to this policy via the website and student communications. Changes will only apply to enrolments entered into after the date of the policy change.

10. CONTACT INFORMATION

For enquiries about fees, payments, or refunds, please contact:

The Animal Academy Pty Ltd

Email: info@animalacademy.com.au

Phone: 1300 290 609

Website: www.animalacademy.com.au

RTO ID: 45907

END OF POLICY